



# Indiana Court Employee Conference

July 29, 2009

Work Styles: Dealing With  
“Difficult People” by Knowing  
Self

Presented by Liz Strong



If you really want to improve your situation, you can work on the one thing over which you have control – yourself...Expand your perspective by expanding your mind.

...Steven R. Covey



It really boils down to this: that all life is interrelated. We are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied to a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly.

...Martin Luther King



Am I the bulb or the light?

...Joseph Campbell



# Work Styles Profile

## Four Paths to the Same Goal

The early work of Carl Jung influenced many communication, leadership, and learning style models. Most experts today believe that people operate using a combination of traits from four common style preferences. And, instead of being four distinct and separate entities, the four styles represent four parts of a whole person; that is, we have a little of all of them in us. So it's not really fair to label a person as one style or another. Unlike a personality -- which is more of a genetic predisposition for certain behaviors and is somewhat fixed at birth -- a work style preference can change with circumstances.

### Spiritual

How will you connect with something that inspires you?



### Emotional

How will you please yourself today?



### Physical

How will you honor your body?



### Intellectual

What will you learn about or contribute?





### **Why examine styles?**

Research shows that people receive and process information in many ways. The greatest learning and the most powerful communication occur when information is delivered in a way that is most natural to the individual receiving it. This packet is designed to help employees and employers meet diverse needs for more effective learning, improved productivity, and greater harmony.

### **What are styles?**

David Kolb and Bernice McCarthy, among others, have identified similarities among groups of people that can be used to facilitate training, supervision, leading, and communicating. For example, in McCarthy's 4Mat learning model, people may show a low to strong preference for receiving and processing information in one or more of four different ways:

- Those who demonstrate a strong Style One preference are "Relationship Builders" who tend to be reflective, enjoy group discussion, and work for harmony.
- Those who rank strongly as a Style Two are "Analyzers" who tend to be logical, enjoy research, and prefer to follow the rules closely.
- Type Three workers are adept "Problem Solvers" who tend to be practical, enjoy hands-on challenges, and want to get to the bottom line.
- Style Four includes "Innovators" who exhibit strong imaginations, enjoy taking risks, and excel at change and adaptation.

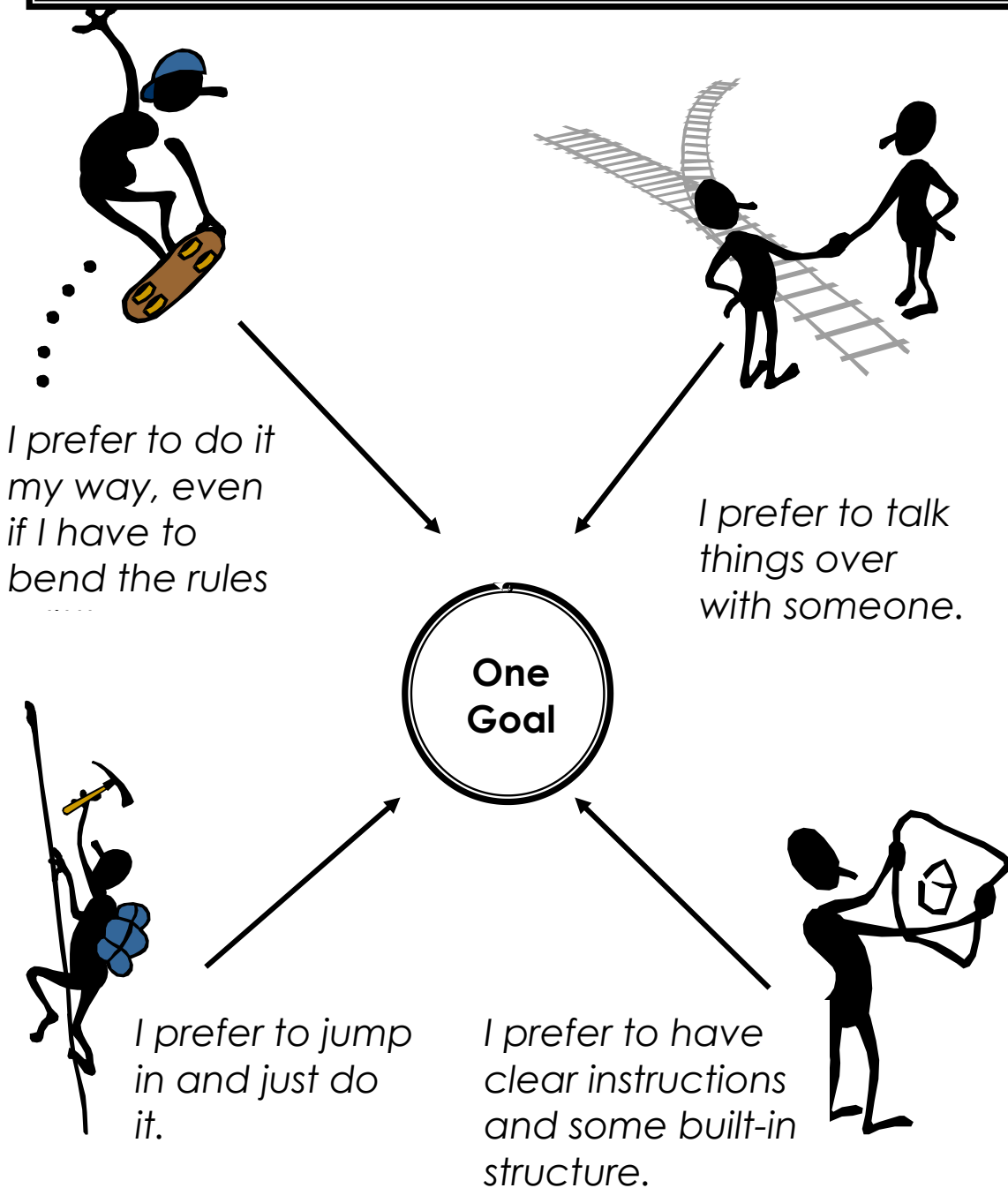
Meeting the needs of all these individuals can be an incredibly exciting and rewarding challenge.

### **Are styles like personalities?**

Styles are more situational than personalities, which are pretty fixed. Let's say a worker who is accustomed to methodically analyzing information as part of her decision-making process is promoted into a position that requires quick thinking and fast action. To succeed, she will have to develop or strengthen more style three traits, which is certainly possible. It just takes self-awareness and practice. Eventually you can become adept at operating from all four styles, even though you may always be most comfortable using one or two.



Most people perceive information (become aware of something) and process it (respond to it) in four different ways.





Before you take the work styles inventory to determine your style preferences, it is important to know...

- No one is 100% any one style. Each of us is a unique blend of characteristics that combine to make us who we are. The inventory is only one tool that may help you examine your style “preference” at this time in your life.
- We get comfortable with a style. Having a style “preference” means you may tend toward a particular emotional, physical, or verbal response to a situation, one that you have become comfortable with over time. That doesn’t mean you always respond that way; it means that most times it’s your first impulse.
- You can change your style. Most of us are comfortable using our right or left hand, but with a little practice we could probably use both. In the same way, with a little practice, we can reshape our style profile to help strengthen our relationships.
- Styles are situational. When in a new work situation, you may find your profile reflects a strong style #1 preference because you are focusing on fitting in with the team; this focus/preference may shift after you’ve been accepted into the group.
- Under stress we tend to respond based on our strongest style preference.





## Work Styles Inventory Instructions

- Find the descriptor most like you and give it a 4.
- Find the descriptor least like you and give it a 1.
- Then rank your 2nd and 3rd choices.
- Add the numbers down each column and total across (should equal 100).
- Transfer scores to the Work Styles Interpretation Sheet.

- I see myself as a/an:
 

1. _____	2. _____	3. _____	4. _____
People person	Details person	Problem solver	Ideas person
- My communication strengths are:
 

1. _____	2. _____	3. _____	4. _____
Good listener	Persuasive	Direct	Enthusiastic
- I like a job best when I can:
 

1. _____	2. _____	3. _____	4. _____
Work with people	Get good information	Get things done	Try new ways
- I tend to seek jobs that allow me to use:
 

1. _____	2. _____	3. _____	4. _____
Communication skills	Planning and organizational skills	Project management skills	Creativity
- When I have a problem at work, I tend to:
 

1. _____	2. _____	3. _____	4. _____
Seek help from others	Do more research	Work it out alone	Day dream
- What makes a department or team function best is:
 

1. _____	2. _____	3. _____	4. _____
Good relationships	Clear expectations	A can-do attitude	Shared vision
- I enjoy working on a team that provides:
 

1. _____	2. _____	3. _____	4. _____
Social interaction	Structure	Interesting problems	Freedom
- I would tend to choose an organization which emphasized:
 

1. _____	2. _____	3. _____	4. _____
Friendly environment	Rules & procedures	Results	Exciting environment
- When I get a new task or responsibility, I prefer to:
 

1. _____	2. _____	3. _____	4. _____
Ask someone to explain it	Sit back and think	Prioritize it	Imagine how I can do it
- When I make work-related decisions, I tend to consider:
 

1. _____	2. _____	3. _____	4. _____
People's needs	The facts	The goal	The big picture

**Totals. Add above columns down and Write totals below; transfer to the Interpretation Sheet.**

1. _____	2. _____	3. _____	4. _____ = 100
Style #1	Style #2	Style #3	Style #4



# Work Styles Interpretation Sheet

Adapted from the work on learning styles by David Kolb and Bernice McCarthy

## Style #4: Ideas Focus

- new ideas are a top priority
- appear outgoing, bubbly
- learn by trial and error
- listen enthusiastically, bored with detailed and dull presentation
- creative team member
- spontaneous and animated
- respond to humor, fun, celebration
- share personal feelings freely
- prefer jobs that honor imagination
- work for challenge and possibilities
- thrive on change and seek it
- may seem flighty and disorganized
- resist structure and rules
- problem solving: try a new way
- decision making: rules can be broken
- expect manager to support ideas

## Style #1: Relationship Focus

- relationships are a top priority
- appear easy going, friendly
- learn by discussing and watching
- listen generously, intimidated by impatient listeners, aggressive behavior
- sensitive team member
- open to ideas, needs, feelings of others
- respond to praise and courtesy
- may be overly sensitive to feedback
- prefer jobs with people contact
- work for harmony, dislike conflict
- uncomfortable with change
- don't want to "rock the boat"
- may hide the truth to not hurt others
- problem solving: seek opinions first
- decision making: everybody agrees
- expect manager to focus on people

## Style #3: Results Focus

- results are a top priority
- appear strong, confident
- learn by practical application
- listen for bottom line, impatient with unfocused, theoretical discussion
- action-oriented team member but may prefer to work alone
- respond to deadlines and progress
- may seem controlling, impersonal
- prefer jobs that are fast-paced
- work to make things happen
- directive, authoritative tone
- like action and action-planning
- sharp, quick, efficient reaction
- make more statements than ask questions, use minimal small talk
- problem solving: just do it
- decision making: plan and act
- expect manager to open doors

## Style #2: Facts Focus

- information is a top priority
- appear quiet, reserved
- learn by reading and analyzing
- listen to understand theory and details, bored with brainstorming
- informed team member but may prefer to work alone
- respond to rules and authority
- resist change without strong rationale
- prefer jobs that require analytical skills
- work for perfection and understanding
- cautious about revealing personal information and feelings
- ask in-depth questions, use minimal small talk
- problem solving: follow instructions
- decision making: identify obstacles and analyze consequences
- expect manager to provide resources





## One important thing to remember:

You are always you. You are not a style one, two, three, or four. You are a complex mixture of styles with unique needs and talents. The best gift you can give yourself is to learn more about all your style resources, which of your talents are resting and how you might activate them. This is a worthy goal and a lifelong challenge. The styles inventory will help you.



# My Table Team Work Style

Add names of table team members

Style 4

Style 1



Style 3

Style 2



## What Each Style Brings to the Team

Each style offers the team many advantages. You'll also observe value differences during interactions that carry the potential for conflict. Understanding these differences as style traits and not attempts to sabotage may help maintain harmony in a group. On the other hand, a style preference is never an excuse for rude behavior.

Style	Team Player Strengths	Value Most	Team Player Issues
#1	<b>The Connector</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a positive, people person</li> <li>• good listener</li> <li>• involves others</li> <li>• creates a relaxed climate</li> <li>• strives for consensus</li> <li>• considers others' needs</li> </ul>	<p>People: rules are okay as long as there can be exceptions based on individual needs.</p> <p>Change is okay as long as everyone wins.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• may be too sensitive</li> <li>• may not like to work alone on a task</li> <li>• may hold back personal opinions</li> </ul>
#2	<b>The Contributor</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a reliable, organized person</li> <li>• does the homework</li> <li>• sets high standards</li> <li>• willing to do research</li> <li>• pushes team to use resources wisely</li> <li>• provides structure</li> </ul>	<p>Rules: rules are necessary and when you follow them, you are right.</p> <p>Change is okay if it makes good sense.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• may be too cautious</li> <li>• may become bogged down in details</li> <li>• may not see other perspectives</li> </ul>
#3	<b>The Challenger</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an honest, principled person</li> <li>• gets things done</li> <li>• takes initiative, even a risk</li> <li>• may disagree with leader</li> <li>• questions goals and actions</li> </ul>	<p>Justice: a few rules are important, but everyone should be treated equally.</p> <p>Change is good.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• may be too independent, controlling</li> <li>• may become too self-righteous</li> <li>• may make hasty decisions</li> </ul>
#4	<b>The Cheerleader</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a big-picture person</li> <li>• flexible, open to new ideas</li> <li>• shares limelight with other team members</li> <li>• energizing, enthusiastic</li> <li>• willing to pitch in and work outside defined role</li> </ul>	<p>Courage: breaking the rules may be important to innovative results.</p> <p>Change is necessary.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• may lose sight of the mission</li> <li>• may not attend to basic tasks</li> <li>• may not consider individual needs of other team members</li> </ul>



### Discussion Question

Discuss the strengths and issues of your team's style profile.  
What areas might you be mindful of to ensure a cohesive team?  
(Be specific.)



## When Four Work Styles Meet

**Differences are necessary**, even critical to productive discussions, but with differences also come issues. That's why structuring a meeting to honor the most obvious needs of each style helps you get the most from all participants. Use the following chart to plan and facilitate a productive meeting.

<p><b>Style #4</b>  <u>Comfort Moments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A flexible agenda</li> <li>■ Encouraged to look beyond stated objectives</li> <li>■ Energy is generated</li> <li>■ Actions are based on intuition</li> <li>■ Creative options encouraged</li> </ul> <p><u>Challenge Zones:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Rigid adherence to agenda and timetable</li> <li>■ People are tentative and cautious</li> <li>■ Strong, spirited interactions are not welcome</li> <li>■ Long monologues</li> <li>■ Decision already made; meeting more political than practical</li> </ul>	<p><b>Style #1</b>  <u>Comfort Moments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Pre-meeting mingling and chatting</li> <li>■ Opinions and solicited</li> <li>■ Environment is open and honest</li> <li>■ Discussion and feelings are considered</li> <li>■ Decisions reached by consensus</li> </ul> <p><u>Challenge Zones:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Insensitivity to feelings</li> <li>■ Lack of trust in the group</li> <li>■ Unresolved conflicts</li> <li>■ Stakeholders' not considered in decisions</li> <li>■ No personal relevancy to the topic established</li> </ul>
<p><b>Style #3</b>  <u>Comfort Moments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Productive, problem-solving climate</li> <li>■ Common sense response is valued</li> <li>■ Ideas are used</li> <li>■ Decisions fit with existing structures and resources</li> <li>■ Closure and responsibilities are clearly defined</li> </ul> <p><u>Challenge Zones:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Lack of focus, lots of side issues explored</li> <li>■ Emotions are vented</li> <li>■ More focus on personalities than issues</li> <li>■ Inattention to practical realities</li> <li>■ Leader does not move to closure</li> </ul>	<p><b>Style #2</b>  <u>Comfort Moments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Issues and tasks clearly defined</li> <li>■ Information is based on facts</li> <li>■ Adequate time to prepare</li> <li>■ Pros and cons are carefully discussed</li> <li>■ The group stays on task</li> <li>■ There is an objective perspective</li> </ul> <p><u>Challenge Zones:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ No agenda</li> <li>■ Leader doesn't know the whole picture</li> <li>■ No time for preparation</li> <li>■ Insufficient time to define the problem</li> <li>■ No clarity as meeting progresses</li> <li>■ Insufficient information for problem-solving</li> </ul>



#### **How to Stretch Your Style #1: Relationship**

- Ask open-ended questions.
- Smile more and encourage people to talk.
- Consider emotional consequences of your actions and words.
- Accept other views without judgment.
- Say thank you more often.
- Respect a person's privacy.
- When change is in the wind, ask how it may impact the team.
- Practice "generous" listening.
- Be sensitive to nonverbal cues.
- Slow down and soften your voice.
- Volunteer to work on a committee.

#### **How to Stretch Your Style #2: Facts**

- Analyze the data before making decisions.
- Listen for details and instructions.
- Seek clarity on the theory or rationale behind a decision.
- Try working alone on a project.
- Consider rules as support, not obstacles.
- On a team, volunteer to do research.
- Proofread your writing carefully.
- Take time to think before responding.
- Slow down when speaking.
- Read more or listen to books on tape.

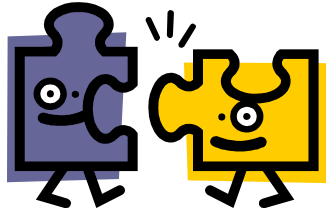
#### **How to Stretch Your Style #3: Results**

- Pick up your pace.
- Take charge of a complex project.
- Write an action plan for each day or week.
- Stay focused on the bottom line.
- Ask questions for greater clarity.
- Volunteer to lead a committee.
- Align with people you can rely on.
- Trust your instincts.
- Get fewer opinions.

#### **How to Stretch Your Style #4: Ideas**

- Volunteer to work with others on a whimsical project
- Find ways to mix fun with work.
- Smile and laugh more.
- Talk more about your personal feelings.
- Add zest (color, music) to your office.
- Practice anything-goes brainstorming.
- Get in touch with your instincts.
- Don't let the details trap your thinking.
- Take a workshop on creativity.





# Meaningful Conversation

*From Turning to One Another: Simple Conversations to Restore Hope to the Future*  
by Margaret J. Wheatley

## Six Principles for a Meaningful Conversation

1. Acknowledge one another as equals. Let go of our roles and meet each other as interested peers.
2. Try to stay curious about each other. This helps us stay focused on listening for something new rather than competing with or judging the speaker.
3. Recognize that we need each other's help to become better listeners, the most difficult aspect of conversation.
4. Start by slowing down and taking time to think and reflect before responding.
5. Remember that conversation is the natural way humans think together.
6. Expect it to be messy at times because we are human and not perfect. Truth often lies at the other side of chaos, so have to allow ourselves to ride out the storm.



*Relating to people is a multifaceted skill, not limited to political savvy and social graces, but including the willingness and the ability to see the world from someone else's eyes.*

What factors can lead to “messy” conversations?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5. Personal differences, such as...



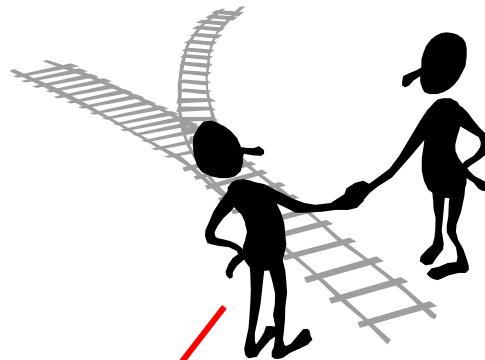
## Four Perspectives to Consider

How we operate is generally driven by how we view the world, our perspective. Our perspective influences how we express ourselves, what we hear, and how we interpret each other's point of view.

**Example:** The importance of rules



*(Style #4: New ideas are a top priority.) Breaking the rules may be necessary to achieve something truly innovative.*

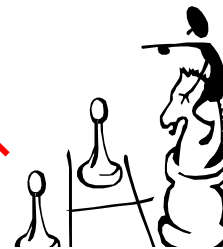


*(Style #1: People and relationships are a top priority.) Rules are okay as long as there can be exceptions based on individual needs.*

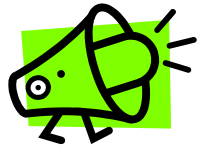
Rules are good, but...



*(Style #3: Results are a top priority.) Rules are important as long as there aren't too many and they allow me to act swiftly.*



*(Style #2: Information is a top priority.) Carefully written rules are necessary and when you follow them, you are right.*



## Communicating...in Style

Below is a model with general communication guidelines that honor all styles.

- If you know a person's specific style preference, be especially aware of the guidelines in the corresponding quadrant below.
- If you don't know the style preference, use the guidelines in all the quadrants.
- For all conversations, use the common courtesies in quadrant one.

### Style 4. Stay focused.

- Ask questions to check for understanding.
- Invite new ideas.
- State next steps clearly.
- Use humor, if appropriate.

### Style 1. Connect at a personal level.

- Be friendly in your approach
- Listen and observe body language.
- Be sincere in your comments.
- Be 100% present with this person.

### Style 3. Encourage interaction.

- Ask for input.
- Avoid unnecessary details.
- Speak their language (straight talk),
- State expectations clearly.

### Style 2. Be clear, complete, concise.

- State the "why" of your message.
- Explain the "what" clearly and thoroughly.
- Give listener time to think & respond.
- Use references the listener understands.



## Communicating in Style...with the Team

**Table Team Exercise:** At a team meeting, you have to announce the need to stagger vacation time over the holidays to be sure the unit is fully represented. Write a script of your comments, being sensitive to how each style will perceive and process the news. The model will help you plan the discussion.

<p><b>Step 4: Stay Focused</b></p> <p>Look for ideas, but keep the discussion on track. Be clear about the next step.</p>	<p><b>Step 1: Connect at a personal level</b></p> <p>Open in a friendly, sincere way.</p>
<p><b>Step 3: Encourage interaction</b></p> <p>Ask questions; invite input; be ready for questions and to be challenged.</p>	<p><b>Step 2: Be clear, complete, concise</b></p> <p>Express your message clearly. Don't expect immediate input. Some may need time to think.</p>



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*Working with Emotional Intelligence*, Daniel Goleman, Bantam, 1998.

*Turning to One Another: Simple Conversations to Restore Hope to the Future* Margaret J. Wheatley





# Additional Resources



## Work Styles Inventory Instructions

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1. _____	2. _____	3. _____	4. _____
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3. I like a job best when I can:
 

1. _____	2. _____	3. _____	4. _____
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4. I tend to seek jobs that allow me to use:
 

1. _____	2. _____	3. _____	4. _____
Communication skills	Planning and organizational skills	Project management skills	Creativity
5. When I have a problem at work, I tend to:
 

1. _____	2. _____	3. _____	4. _____
Seek help from others	Do more research	Work it out alone	Day dream
6. What makes a department or team function best is:
 

1. _____	2. _____	3. _____	4. _____
Good relationships	Clear expectations	A can-do attitude	Shared vision
7. I enjoy working on a team that provides:
 

1. _____	2. _____	3. _____	4. _____
Social interaction	Structure	Interesting problems	Freedom
8. I would tend to choose an organization which emphasized:
 

1. _____	2. _____	3. _____	4. _____
Friendly environment	Rules & procedures	Results	Exciting environment
9. When I get a new task or responsibility, I prefer to:
 

1. _____	2. _____	3. _____	4. _____
Ask someone to explain it	Sit back and think	Prioritize it	Imagine how I can do it
10. When I make work-related decisions, I tend to consider:
 

1. _____	2. _____	3. _____	4. _____
People's needs	The facts	The goal	The big picture

**Totals. Add above columns down and Write totals below; transfer to the Interpretation Sheet.**

1. _____	2. _____	3. _____	4. _____ = 100
Style #1	Style #2	Style #3	Style #4



# My Team Work Style

Add names of team members

Style 4

Style 1



Style 3

Style 2



## 1. Alone...but not for long

Katherine has been asked to work with Robert to develop a front-desk manual. Katherine finds the project interesting but dreads having to work with someone else on it. Robert dreads the assignment because he knows Katherine has complained to the supervisor about working with him. Katherine has always intimidated him.

- What work style is Katherine's behavior demonstrating?
- Knowing this about Katherine, use the model to plan how might Robert handle their first meeting.

#4: Commit	#1: Care
#3: Communicate	#2: Clarify

Notes



## 2. Whiner

Ethel, a coworker, is in your office complaining—again—this time about the workload and how she works so much harder than others in the office and how nothing seems to get done about it. This is just one of her themes. Whenever she's bored, she plops herself in a chair by your desk and whines on.

- How does Ethel's constant whining impact the morale of the team?
- Use the model to plan a way to tell Ethel you don't have time for this kind of negative chit chat.

#4: Commit	#1: Care
#3: Communicate	#2: Clarify

Notes



### 3. Knee Jerk

Beth's office has more work than people. The situation is tense and no one seems to have much fun anymore. Her energy level is very low and she resents being asked to do something that she doesn't think is her responsibility. A coworker is out ill and Beth's manager has asked her to take over for her for the day. Beth slams her notebook down, comments that she's tired of being taken advantage of, and storms off to her module.

- How does Beth's behavior impact the morale of the team?
- Use the model to plan a "self-talk" session for Beth to help her handle her emotions before responding to her manager.

#4: Commit	#1: Care
#3: Communicate	#2: Clarify

Notes





#### 4. Whew...

Anna is swamped with work. She has several things that have to be done before she leaves the office tonight. She's behind because she has been out of the office for three days on personal leave. She really wishes someone would offer to help her out so she can get home in time to have dinner with her family, but she hesitates to ask. She skipped breaks and lunch, but at 4:30 everyone closes up and no one offers to help. She feels resentful and depressed.

- What style behavior might Anna have been demonstrating?
- How might Anna solve the problem before becoming depressed over it?
- Use the model to think about how a coworker might have helped Anna?

#4: Commit	#1: Care
#3: Communicate	#2: Clarify

Notes



## 5. Not Fair

Connie is regularly in and out of the office. When she's not there, you are expected to cover her workload.

- How does Connie's behavior impact the morale of the team?
- Use the model to plan how you might approach Connie about the problem.

#4: Commit	#1: Care
#3: Communicate	#2: Clarify

Notes



## 6. Dirty Dishes

It seems like you are the only one who cleans up the lunchroom after you're finished. Everybody else just puts the dishes in the sink. If you leave them, they won't get done. You can't stand the mess. What do you do?

Use the model to plan a way to talk about the problem with your team in a way that will get your point across without creating a bigger problem.

#4: Commit	#1: Care
#3: Communicate	#2: Clarify

Notes